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Natural Religion and World Society Reflections on Morality, Belief, and Experience

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Abstract:	David Hume's reputation as a 'moral atheist' (Gaskin 1988/ 1998) was based on his distinction between the spheres of everyday morality from the institutionalized dogmas of religion. In discussing morality in the rise of World Society, this paper compares the contrasting approaches of Hume and Durkheim to morality and religion, the 'science of man' against the science of the 'sacred' respectively, in order to question the Durkheimian moral concept of the 'Church' as a moralist step too far from Hume's emancipating concept of 'natural religion'. Furthermore, the paper asks if the concept of the 'sacred', which is embedded throughout the history of the 'anthropology of religion' in various ways and contexts (see Ruel 1982, Tambiah 1990, Asad 1993), constitutes a Christian fundamentalist way of thinking, ideologically manifested as a kind of naturalized enthusiasm. By liberating Durkheim's approach to the sacred from its moral implications, when associated with the evolution of the morality of purity and pollution (Douglas 1966), the paper expands on the question of morality, on the one hand, looking at moral sense as an intuition, and on the other, as an institutionalized habitus. In doing so, the paper compares anthropological and psychological approaches to Belief, Design, and Experience, in relation to the sacred. In this context, the paper further wonders if the Human is naturally a fundamentalist animal, motivated by sacred delusions, passions, and self-centrism, as manifested in the Dialogues through the characters of Philo, Demea, and Cleanthes, whose personal emotions challenge the Christian ideal of transgression and unity expressed in numinous sacred experiences. At the same time though, the author examines if this secularized approach to the sacred is limited in terms of the emotional and subliminal feelings of religious practices. This has implications regarding methodological issues of interpretation in anthropology and ethnography, the gap between theory and practice respectively. In conclusion, the paper returns to Hume's emancipating concept of 'natural religion' as a kind of pagan, emancipated, universal, and amoral appreciation of the objective natural world (which includes the subjective human mind), finally wondering if at this moment of History, the birth of a new world religion would instinctively connect humanity in a Kantian process of the formation of a World Society.
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Natural Religion and World Society

Reflections on Morality, Belief, and Experience

Abstract

David Hume's reputation as a 'moral atheist' (Gaskin 1988/ 1998) was based on his distinction between the spheres of everyday morality from the institutionalized dogmas of religion. In discussing morality in the rise of World Society, this paper compares the contrasting approaches of Hume and Durkheim to morality and religion, the 'science of man' against the science of the 'sacred' respectively, in order to question the Durkheimian moral concept of the 'Church' as a moralist step too far from Hume's emancipating concept of 'natural religion'. Furthermore, the paper asks if the concept of the 'sacred', which is embedded throughout the history of the 'anthropology of religion' in various ways and contexts (*see* Ruel 1982, Tambiah 1990, Asad 1993), constitutes a Christian fundamentalist way of thinking, ideologically manifested as a kind of naturalized enthusiasm. By liberating Durkheim's approach to the sacred from its moral implications, when associated with the evolution of the morality of purity and pollution (Douglas 1966), the paper expands on the question of morality, on the one hand, looking at moral sense as an intuition, and on the other, as an institutionalized *habitus*. In doing so, the paper compares anthropological and psychological approaches to Belief, Design, and Experience, in relation to the sacred. In this context, the paper further wonders if the Human is naturally a fundamentalist animal, motivated by sacred delusions, passions, and self-centrism, as manifested in the *Dialogues* through the characters of Philo, Demea, and Cleanthes, whose personal emotions challenge the Christian ideal of transgression and unity expressed in numinous sacred experiences. At the same time though, the author examines if this secularized approach to the sacred is limited in terms of the emotional and subliminal feelings of religious practices. This has implications regarding methodological issues of interpretation in anthropology and ethnography, the gap between theory and practice respectively. In conclusion, the paper returns to Hume's emancipating concept of 'natural religion' as a kind of pagan, emancipated, universal, and amoral appreciation of the objective natural world (which includes the subjective human mind), finally wondering if at this moment of History, the birth of a new world religion would *instinctively* connect humanity in a Kantian process of the formation of a World Society.

The Free Spirit of David Hume (May 7, 1711 – August 25, 1776)

In 1745, David Hume applied for the chair of Ethics and Pneumatical Philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, but was promptly rejected by the University's principal, who accused him of 'atheism, heresy, and scepticism' (Pike 1970: xi). The accusations echoed Hume's characterization as a 'moral atheist', referring to both his writings and his way of life (Gaskin 1988, 1998: xxi-xxii, also cited in O'Connor 2001: 14, 16). Growing up in the strict Presbyterian environment of 18th century Scotland and educated in the popular Calvinist Creed, the adolescent Hume came to have 'an accurate philosophical turn'[1] away from the Christian Church, towards polytheism, druidism, and paganism (Smith 1947: 9-13, Pike 1970: 10-11, Siebert 1990: 69-72, O'Connor 2001: 2-3, among others)[2]. This turn towards 'natural religion' inevitably comes to mind in a short walk from the city to the outskirts of Edinburgh, the birthplace of the philosopher. The ancient city of Edinburgh is a very dark place, marked by imposing black cathedrals and gothic towers. As the visitor walks through the dark alleys towards the green hills at the western borders of the city, he/she cannot but

feel amazed by the beauty and perfection of the landscape, with its wild life still intact, the beauty of the green hills and the ancient red rocks sprawling out of the fields. From the top of the hill, the Castle and the Cathedral directly belong to this natural order, as if the buildings spring out of the ancient red rock. It is not an unsubstantiated assumption therefore to imagine Hume's ideas of religion, which he often associated with fear and anxiety, to be aesthetically motivated by the architecture of the city he grew up, the same city that rejected him. The gothic city also says something about the fear of God and the power of the Church in Presbyterian Scotland. When the pressure was building up, maybe the young Hume took this walk, away from the religious centre to the green hills, and out of the darkness of the black Cathedral, to the playful light of the sun and the clouds; the Scottish Enlightenment.

In one of his anonymous essays, entitled 'On Superstition and Enthusiasm' (1741/ in Haakonsen 1994: 46-50), Hume was critical of the institutions of 'false religion' and their 'enthusiasts' (a characterization he adopted from John Locke[3]). On the one hand, he associated superstition with the fear and anxiety of nature which can lead to the unquestionable submission to the authority of priesthood. On the other, he further associated the feeling of enthusiasm with uncontrolled emotional positivism, which can lead to fanaticism and religious violence. In this context, Hume saw no relation of reason and morality to religion, as in his view, popular religions were based on 'vulgar votaries, a species of daemonism', encouraging 'vulgar' and 'popular superstitions' (EHU 1/11, and DNR: 121). Furthermore, he was convinced that monotheist religions were in essence totalitarian institutions that promised an after-life, among other doctrines, 'play some whimsies of monkies in human shape' (also in Smith 1947: 9-24, Siebert 1990: 95-104, among others). By contrast, for Hume the pagan religions of ancient Greece and Rome were closer to earthly materialism and everyday life, tolerance and sociability, while leaving 'no such deep impression on the affections and understanding'[4]. In the rebellious spirit of the Enlightenment, Hume (re)turned towards a 'natural religion', referring to a Newtonian approach to the Divine, based on the critical examination of *a posteriori* observations, rationalizations, and experimentalism, in *his* search for God in Nature.

For the emancipated Hume, the way to overcome superstition in religion was by investigating it through the lenses of philosophy and the concept of 'natural religion'. This effort to return to nature echoed the spirit of the Scottish and European Enlightenment as an escape from the fears and illusions imposed by the Church. In this context, Hume's early *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), as well as, his *Essays, Moral and Political* (1741-2) and *An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748), launched a philosophical project that aimed to formulate: 'an attempt to introduce the experimental method into moral subjects'. His method has been compared to a fork, called 'Hume's Fork', and referring to the fork as a material body of *a priori* natural logic of numbers, science, and reasoning, and the food on top of it referring to *a posteriori* empirical and experimental understandings of the natural world (as in O' Connor 2001: 20-21). For Hume, the dogmas of the religious institutions of his time were only *a priori* assumptions and dogmas imposed by the Church that had nothing to do with reasoning, logic, emotions, and everyday morality. Therefore, Hume's moral philosophy was to study the human nature outside these *a priori* false assumptions, paving the way to the 'science of man', which anticipated the birth of the Humanities in the following century.

Dialogues concerning Natural Religion

Hume's investigation of the nature of Belief was enacted in his enigmatic play entitled *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion;* a philosophical inquiry in belief and style, order and

disorder, the existence of evil and reason-ing, written in the form of a Socratic dialogue. But while Plato's Socratic dialogues are underlined by a strong moral sense and a crystal-clear direction towards specific self-reflective conclusions, Hume's *Dialogues* are inconclusive and enigmatic -as much as the man himself. The fictional play consists of three main characters (and a narrator) who represent three contemporary approaches to the Divine at the time the *Dialogues* were written (published in 1779)[5]: the faithful Demea represents the *a priori fideism* of 'rigid, inflexible Orthodoxy' (DNR: 30); the design theorist Cleanthes represents an opposing type of theism to that of Demea, based on *a posteriori* inductive 'experimentalism'[6]; and in between the two characters/positions stands the Socratic protagonist of the dialogues, the 'mitigated' sceptic Philo, who, according to most commentators, represents the views of the author (Pike 1970: xvi; O'Connor 2001: 12, 26-28, 42-44)[7]. Hume's God is indifferent, unapproachable, and inaccessible, an invisible existence that can be found everywhere and nowhere, unreachable beyond the limits of our physical senses, and the imaginations and logic of the human mind. Shades of Philo express this view, which ironically echoes the views of the faithful Demea. In other words that there is no point in discussing the existence of God, for there is no reasoning in faith, neither there is any rationality or logic that can reach God. This conviction echoes Cleanthes' accusation towards Philo of Pyrrhonistic scepticism, but significantly, none of the three characters questions the existence of God in itself. In this sense, Hume does not question God, but rather focuses on the human mind, examining on the one hand, the feeling of Belief as expressed by Demea, and on the other, the limits of the Design theory as patented by Cleanthes.

The play between the three characters reflects upon the 18th century religious hypothesis of the Design Theory, as first expressed by Cleanthes, which is then critically challenged by Philo, in sort that the world is 'nothing but one great machine' in which the causal and functional order found in nature 'resembles' the order found among humans, and by analogy: 'the Author [God] of nature is somewhat similar to the mind of man' (DNR: 45). Philo challenges this anthropomorphic, inductive, teleological, and intellectualist approach to the Divine on two levels. First, by undermining the analogy in itself as he challenges Cleanthes' assumption that the universe is similar to a house and that the universe was created by some sort of a human mind, arguing that this view does not hold empirical grounds[8]; second, as the conversation turns towards the instinct of belief and the instinctual feeling of design -as stated by Cleanthes-, Philo, and through him Hume, concedes that: 'A purpose, an intention, a design strikes everywhere the most careless, the most stupid thinker; and no man can be so hardened in absurd systems, as at all times to reject it' (DNR: 116). Philo then continues by highlighting the 'universal approbation' of the 'belief of invisible, intelligent power', which however, he is very careful to distance from the institutions of Religion (i.e. 'the first religious principles'). In other words, while Philo agrees with Cleanthes that Belief is a universal human and natural *instinct*, Religion is instead a 'preconception' that 'springs not from an original instinct or primary impression of nature […] since every instinct of this kind has been found absolutely universal in all nations and ages […] The first religious principles must be secondary' (NHR: 134, also cited in O'Connor 2001: 92)[9].

In this context, Hume through his character Philo distances himself from the Christian Church, turning towards a more universal and naturalistic appropriation of the instinct of Belief. If the question over the existence of God is unanswerable, and the realm of God unreachable, then Hume's scholarship is in itself bounded within the limits of nature and reason. This forms a Humean paradox, in a sense that the philosopher talks about 'religion', as if it is not the 'true (natural) religion' he anticipates. 'God' here is defined as a natural and emotional manifestation of the Human Mind, rather than of God, because there is no point in

discussing the existence of God, whose realm exists in a different dimension from the material world. This point of view is ironically raised by both the faithful Demea and the sceptic Philo, despite their extremely contrasting attitudes towards religion. If the question over the existence of God is unanswerable and unreachable, Hume's scholarship is in itself bounded within the limits of reason and materialism. The religious hypothesis thus becomes a question of human nature and human praxis (rather than a question regarding the existence of God). In this sense, Hume's discussion of Belief transcends the limits of the category of 'religion', expanding towards a study of the Human Mind, which anticipated by a century the social anthropology, sociology, and psychology associated with the category of 'religion'.

More specifically, Hume's anthropological legacy is largely based on two contrasting, and yet, complementary works, which were written at the same time he was putting together the *Dialogues*: on the one hand, *The History of England* (1754) which historically examined the role of the Christian establishment in the formation of English identity, using an interdisciplinary approach that combined the study of the history of English institutions through an anthropological perspective; and on the other, the philosophical enquiry into the *Natural History of Religion* (1757), in which he developed his philosophical project towards the emancipation from the English institutions and the strict Calvinist environment of his childhood. Hume's anthropological legacy thus anticipated a number of branches of the tree of Humanities, from the 19th century Intellectualist evolutionary study of animism to the functionalist psychological approaches to religion and the fear of nature (Tylor, Frazer, Malinowski), the Jungian study of archetypes and instinctual behaviour to the Durkheimian study of the relationship of the self to society, and deep into the 20th century social and psychological functionalisms (Evans-Pritchard, Needham, Southwold) and symbolism (Douglas) to structuralism (Levi-Strauss) and post-structuralism (Bourdieu), and the study of everyday behaviour as a *habitus* (Mauss, Goffman, Geertz, Foucault, among others). It would be thus impossible due to the limits of this paper to reflect upon the entire legacy of Hume in relation to the study of the human mind and society. Yet, I wish here to reflect upon current trends in the anthropology of religion, in relation to the sacred feeling found in Durkheim's moral concept of *religo* ('to unite'), on the basis of the two themes that spring out of the *Dialogues*: the condition of Belief and the nature of Design.

The Sacred

The contrasting approaches of Hume and Durkheim to religion reflect upon their contrasting understandings of the self in the world. This can be comparatively illustrated in relation to their respective writings on the act of suicide. Hume's rebellious essay 'On Suicide' (published under the title *Of Suicide and the Immortality of the Soul* in 1783, seven years after the author's death) is a testament of his belief in the absolute freedom of the individual against the dogmas and fear of eternal damnation imposed by the Church: 'I believe that no man ever threw away life while it was worth keeping' (2005: 10). Hume contextualizes this statement in the reciprocal relationship between Society and the Individual as a social contract, however, rhetorically expanding on the individual right to withdraw oneself from society if someone thinks that has no power left in him/her to 'promote the interest of the public': 'All our obligations to do good to society seem to imply something reciprocal. I receive the benefits of society, and therefore ought to promote its interests; but when I withdraw myself altogether from society can I be bound any longer?' In fact, for Hume this 'resignation of life' is a 'laudable' duty to society (*Ibid*: 9).

By contrast, Durkheim in his *Suicide* (published in 1897) morally associated the act of taking your own life with the lack of social solidarity in industrialized societies. Furthermore, he controversially argued that because the Catholic establishment gives more emphasis on family as a way of life, the rates of suicide are lower than in Protestant countries where there is an emphasis on individual freedom. Seen in its totality, suicide is as much a psychological as a sociological reaction to the anomic and impersonal modern societies (also in Turner 2011: 31). This approach to suicide should be seen in the greater context of Durkheim's definition of 'society' as an ideal moral community, underpinned by a Judeo-Christian morality which 'embraced an altruistic (Kantian) model of the individual' (Turner 2011: 48). As the prominent Durkheimian analyst Talcott Parsons exclaimed, Durkheim's idea of 'society' was a strong moral rejection of Herbert Spencer's utilitarian theory. As Parsons has highlighted both concepts of the 'individual' and the 'social' are theoretical abstractions, they do not correspond to a social reality. In this context, by 'social reality' Durkheim referred to collective representations of a collective conscious that exists outside the Individual, an *a priori* 'psychic' force that found expression through the 'collective conscience' of a group (Parsons 1968/ 1937: 355-359). Parsons's influential analysis gave to Durkheim's concept of 'society' the moral depth of communal life, in which solidarity is a moral obligation, a personal matter of social order, morally opposed to self-interest and indifference found in *anomic* societies. For Durkheim, this ideal of a moral community was a universal one. He argued: 'Egoism has been universally classified among the amoral traits […] if there is such a thing as morality, it must link man to goals that go beyond the circle of individual interests' (1973: 65).

In *The Division of Labour in Society* [1893] Durkheim described social solidarity as a collective feeling, 'the foundation of the moral order' (Durkheim, 1973: 139). He saw Modernity as a process of transition from 'mechanical' and agricultural systems to 'organic' forms of solidarity in industrialized large-scale societies. This transition raised moral questions in relation to the rise of individualism and self-interest as the norm. Accordingly, in *Suicide,* he controversially argued that: 'The causes of death are outside rather than within us, and are effective only if we venture into the sphere of activity' (1951: 43). In the face of an impersonal 'society', which pre-exists *a priori* and independently from each individual, Durkheim approached the act of committing suicide as a 'social fact': '[...] a fact *sui generic,* with its own unity, individuality and consequently its own nature –a nature, furthermore, more dominant social.' (*Ibid*: 46). In this context: 'Social facts are to be treated *comme des choses* in this sense, they are exterior to the actor in the sense of belonging to the "external world" and they "constrain" him in the sense of being outside his personal control, constituting thus a set of conditions to which his action must be adapted' (Parsons 1968/1937: 365).

In this moral context, Durkheim went even further to define 'religion' from the Latin term *religare*, meaning 'to unite/ to bind', as the external to each individual moral and collective force that binds people together into a community, the 'Church', through shared beliefs and experiences: 'A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden –beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere them' (1995: 44). *The Elementary Forms* do not try to approve or disprove the existence of God; rather, Durkheim's final book discusses God as a figurative expression of Society, and how this figure is used both in moral life and in terms of rites and rituals. In this manner, Durkheim tried to understand the 'transcendental logic' of religious representations, in order to investigate the *a priori* origins of 'society' (Morris 1987: 119, and also *see* Parsons 1968/1937: 301, Lukes 1977: 471, and

Aldridge 2007:33 and 67, among others). This elementary definition of 'religion' broke away from the evolutionist traditions of the previous century, largely based on Hume's concept of 'natural religion', which were developed by Edward Tylor and Sir James Frazer, who associated primitive animism with the practice of magic in paradigmatic opposition to science (Morris 1987: 98-106, and Tambiah 1990: 50-51). For Durkheim: 'Science is said to deny religion in principle. But religion exists; it is a system of given facts; in short, it is reality. How could science deny a reality?' (1995: 432). Furthermore, Durkheim argued that the category of science, similarly to the categories of religion and magic depend on public opinion: '[…] everything in social life rests on opinion, including science itself. To be sure we can make opinion an object of study and create a science of it; that is what sociology principally consists in' (1995: 439). In this context, he held the controversial idea that: 'the fundamental categories of thought, and consequently of science, are of religious origin' (1973: 191, 1995: 367).

Durkheim illustrated his ideas in his study of the Totem as an emblem of Australian tribal societies carrying a 'moral force': '[…] like the clan of which it is a symbol, can be realized only in and through them […] active within them' (Durkheim, 1979:34). Yet, as Van Gennep wrote in 1913 in his critical review of the book, and Lukes (1973) and Giddens (1978) among others also exclaimed, Durkheim's use of material coming exclusively from Australia represented allegedly as the universal elements of religious thought was: 'not even typical of Australian Totemism, let alone totemic systems in other parts of the world' (Giddens 1978: 101). This methodological ambiguity is rooted in Durkheim's definition of Totemism as: 'the most primitive and simplest religion which it is possible to find' (Durkheim cited in Lukes 1973: 457). These contradictions in the Durkheimian methodology were further raised on the basis of the absence of prayer and a Christian concept of Belief in tribal Australia. Levi-Strauss, in his critical reproach to *Totemism* (1962), argued that Totemism is not a homogeneous 'religion'; neither the totem is simply an emblem of 'society'; It is 'not an organic synthesis, an object in social nature' (1962: 5); rather, Totemism refers to a particular way of heterogeneous ways of thinking, which are functionally and organically built on the basis of a combination of four categories of understanding the natural world: nature, culture, group, and persons (*Ibid*: 16-17): 'By its origin and its manifestations it belongs to biology and psychology, not to anthropology. The question is no longer to know why Totemism exists where it exists […] (but) to understand why it does not exist everywhere' (*Ibid*: 58). Thus, Levi-Strauss returned to Hume's animistic ideas of 'natural religion' in his quest for the universal mind, by developing structuralism as a methodology to understand the cognitive structures that underline human behaviour and history.

The Design of Belief

In his early *Treatise of Human Nature* [1938] Hume poetically developed the idea of 'moral subjects'. Smith notes that for Hume:

> 'Moral distinctions, in any experience we have them, are, he maintains, of purely human significance. Like ***aesthetic*** satisfactions they are inseparably bound up with the animal and other special conditions of our creaturely existence; in forced abstractions from these, they have neither meaning nor validity […] Our aesthetic and moral sentiment thus stand, Hume holds, on a level with the so-called secondary qualities of matter; like the they are conditioned by the "complication of circumstances" [cited from the *Treatise* III, Part I, p. 469], partly bodily and partly mental, which determines our mode of existence as animal. This is an analogy […]

> our moral experiences yield no data upon which a theology can be reared, and that they are indeed less, and not more, worthy of being used as a basis of analogy, than our intellectual capacities […"the moral qualities of man are more defective in their kind than his natural abilities", *Dialogues*, p.219] (Smith 1947: 32-33).

Hume demonstrated this in his essay entitled 'Of Miracles', which was initially kept in his desk due to the readers' religious sensitivities (meaning their enthusiastic superstition), until it was included in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (published in 1748, Section X). Hume saw miracles as violations of the natural order of the cosmos, and in the context of 'natural religion', the belief in miracles is in itself false, for their credibility is based on their social acceptance by a group of people -rather than natural law-. If then miracles are social 'facts' (as in Durkheimian sociology of 'society' and the 'sacred') then their value is deceitful, believed only by 'ignorant and barbarous nations' (X: ii, 94). The question then is if belief is a natural instinct in itself, and whether the instinct is psycho-social in its nature, or whether 'society' is itself a false delusion -like miracles-.

Through his discussion of the disillusioned belief in miracles, Hume's aim was to show how Belief is as much a psychological instinct as it has a social value, echoing Durkheim. For the latter, Belief was a 'social fact'. In other words its validity depended on social acceptance: if something is accepted as 'true' that is because it is socially conditioned. Hume, however, distinguished between 'false' from 'true' beliefs, which echoed his greater separation of 'false' religious institutions from 'true religion'. He did so by making a clear-cut distinction between the spheres of everyday morality and reason from the sphere of religion. Throughout his writings on religion, Hume critically discarded the assumption that moral order depends on belief, in the same way the feeling of obligation cannot be reduced to a mere 'social fact', but it is also a memory, a *habitus*. Echoing the separation of 'true' from 'false' religion, Hume further separated true from false belief, the first identified with the religious institutions and dogmatism, while the latter with the emancipating instinct of Belief, as the means to judge its true value by weighting empirical evidence for and against it. Accordingly, a false belief was associated with the Platonic deceiving world of poetry, ideas and fictions, a shadow of reality in Plato's Cave; by contrast, the 'true' nature of belief is essentially instinctual, universal, natural, and social; in other words, earthly by nature.

Therefore, while for Hume belief was an *a posteriori* psychological matter, for Durkheim it was an *a priori* 'social fact' and obligation a social contract. Subsequently, while Hume's feeling of 'sympathy' is used to psychologically, as well as, aesthetically function as the essence of moral order, having nothing to do with 'religion' and/or 'society', or the 'Church'. For Hume the function of the Church is no other than to, on the one hand, increase anxiety and the fear of God, while on the other, to eliminate the fear of disorder both in nature and in society, in order to restore the confidence and order of God. Emotions and feelings are thus central in comparing Hume to Durkheim's understanding of faith. While for Hume the instinct of sympathy for example has nothing to do with religion, but it is an archetypal instinct, a Jungian part of human nature, in Durkheim the concept of the 'sacred' is dressed with an *a priori* Judeo-Christian moral sense of 'good' and 'evil'. Thus, while Hume retains the earthly uses of morality as separated from religious superstition and fanaticism, and limited within the science of MAN –as also Philo demonstrates in the *Dialogues*-, Durkheim's feeling is morally grounded to ideas and ideals of purity and pollution, as discussed by Robert Hertz (1960)[10] and Mary Douglas (1966) among others. In this context, the moral and highly emotional concept of the 'sacred' carries a sense of blindness, manifested either as superstition and submission to the naturalized, institutionalized, and

established order, which when it becomes a matter of personal identity inevitably leads to monotheistic fanaticism, echoing Hume's paper 'Of Superstition and Enthusiasm'. Douglas' appropriation of Humean thought therefore raises the question if the 'science of the sacred' was a step too far from Nature in Hume's 'science of Man'. Douglas demonstrated that from a Humean perspective, human everyday practices, such as washing and eating, carry no religious value, but they are designed and repeated small rituals (or *habitus*), which because they are conceived as 'natural', 'drag nature into the discussion of 'culture' (Douglas 1975).

'[…] belief is an act of the mind arising from custom […]
which renders realities more present to us than fictions'
[David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* 114]

'Necessity is something that exists in the mind, not in objects'
[Hume *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion* 48]

Mary Douglas in her discussion of evidence and the methodological issue of the limits of translation in anthropology, contextualized her famous work on *Purity and Pollution* (1966) as a by-product of Humean thought. In reading Hume, Douglas highlights that 'causality is no more than a "construction upon past experience" […] due to "force of habit"' (Hume cited in Douglas 1975: 276)[11]. The highly ordered moral cosmos of *Purity and Pollution* exists in the Mind, it is not the natural universe. By analogy the natural order we see in nature is the same cognitive function imposed upon nature, which is essentially chaotic. In this context, she tried 'to show how the world of nature is dragged into the arguments about society' (*Ibid*: 281) and the moral implications of the Durkheimian sociology of the Sacred. Her subsequent work on *Natural Symbols* (1970) moved further, echoing Cleanthes' Design Theory, which functionally associated patterns found in nature to patterns of human activity. Accordingly, Douglas' work on body symbolism and the cosmos targeted the 'characteristics of the classification system itself […] the logical patterning deployed in social behaviour' (*Ibid*: 312, 314). In this way, Douglas illustrated the process of naturalizing both morality (in terms of purity and pollution, 1966) and perception (in terms of cosmology, 1970). Her aim was, in direct reference to Humean appreciation of the 'true' nature of religion as opposed to 'false' religion, to show how the perceived as *a priori* emotional realm of religion becomes a personal 'experience of society'. Yet, as Waxman has highlighted: 'Custom […] is insufficient, by itself, to generate *belief* in any causal relation' (1994: 168)[12]. In addition to custom, the *habitus* carries stylistic *impressions*, including memory (highly subjective and irregular), uncontrolled instincts (Archetypes in Jungian psychoanalysis), and the power of the *habitus* in itself through style and repetition to convince of its 'natural' truth-ness -in other words to become a 'social fact' (Durkheim).

In introducing his book on *Belief, Language, and Experience*, Rodney Needham (1972) cited the above quote to pave the way for his investigation of the 'interior state' of belief as externalized through religious practices (Needham further citing Evans-Pritchard's work on Nuer religion, 1972: 14-15, 66). Needham placed his emphasis on the psychology and language of belief, redefined as 'an artificial contrivance for the convenience and advantage of society' (*Ibid*: 150). Interestingly, however, Needham seems to be entrapped in his own logic, as in the very beginning of his book he highlighted that Penang of Borneo, where he conducted his fieldwork, 'had no formal creed'. This observation returns to the question of translation and interpretation of belief-statements, particularly when vague terms such as 'belief' and 'experience' have a different meaning among different peoples, or do not even exist as categories of thought in the first place. In his ground-breaking article on 'Christians

as Believers', Malcolm Ruel (1982: 9-31) while reflecting upon his fieldwork in West Africa, questioned the historical and cultural associations invested in Needham's term of 'belief' as compromised by the dominant Christian understanding of 'belief' as an experience (i.e. the "numinous", Rudolf Otto: 1958: 5-11). When belief is contextualized within a particular morality, then it is first expressed as an obligation, a duty, a religious 'commitment', and second as an 'interior state'. Ruel came to question this emphasis on esotericism and psychology (*see* Ruel's criticism of Needham, 1982: 27-8) raising the question to what extend have Christian ideology and morality affected the so-called 'science' of Humanities, including the study of religion in various contexts.

These methodological issues in the science of the sacred thus extend to wider issues of interpretation and representation in anthropology and its practice ethnography. They are mainly of two kinds: a-historicity and morality. In respect to the first, Tambiah (1990) and Asad (1973/1993) discussed the historical predicament and association of the anthropological discourse to colonialism and post-colonialism, particularly in his discussion of Christianity and modernity. The term 'religion' was further scrutinized because of its unchallenged moralist association with the collective, in a naturalized moral opposition to 'evil' acts of self-interest. Tambiah's discussion indirectly refers to Durkheim's illustration of the 'sacred' realm, defined as a 'religion' from the Latin verb '*religo'* (meaning to 'unite'), which underlines his entire sociology as one based on the morality of the collective against individual self-interest. This also implies the self-sacrifice of the individual for the common 'good' (i.e. the symbolic figure of Christ), which contrasts to Durkheim definition of 'witchcraft' in the moral terms of self-interest, i.e. a group of 'women' working against the common good expressed by the male dominated religious hierarchy of the Durkheimian 'Church' (Durkheim 1912/1995). Furthermore, Tambiah argued that this moral separation of 'religious' from 'magical' acts was historically a 'Protestant legacy which was automatically taken over by later Victorian theorists like Tylor and Frazer, and given a universal significance as both historical and analytical categories useful in tracing the intellectual development of mankind from savagery to civilization' (Tambiah 1990: 19). In this context, Tambiah noted that translation is inadequate in transferring the *quality* of information taken from the field, first because the meaning of beliefs and conceptions changes over time, and second because the same terms are understood and practiced in different ways from one place to another, according to the insider's point of view[13]. In this complicated pretext 'translation implies *some* measure of comparability, and comparability in turn implies *some* measure of *commensurability*. But this inference has brought us to the threshold of the thorny and contested issue of how we are to understand *commensurability* and *comparison*' (Tambiah 1990: 125).

In sum, we could argue for a return to the emancipating concept of 'natural religion', liberated from its moral implications, which are directly associated with the evolution of the Judeo-Christian morality and ideology of Puritanism (as Mary Douglas demonstrated 1966, 1970), for a return to the field of the 'anthropology of religion' as a daily practice(s) (in the spirit of Marcel Mauss), which includes religion along with other spheres of private and collective performances that constitute social life. At the same time, however, we should also ask if this secularized approach to the 'sacred' is limited in terms of the emotional and subliminal feelings religion brings to people. In this context, we cannot help but wonder if the Human is naturally a fundamentalist animal, motivated by sacred delusions, passions, and self-interest, as manifested in the *Dialogues* through the characters of Philo, Demea, and Cleanthes, emotions which challenge the Christian ideals of transgression and unity as expressed through *numinous* 'sacred' experiences. Below I wish to further investigate

transcendental experiences from the psychological perspective of C.G. Jung whose ideas are very close to both Hume and Durkheim, the former associated with 'nature', the latter with the collective consciousness.

Experience: Jung and Durkheim

For both Jung and Durkheim religion was a matter of personal *experience*, a way to connect the individual to the wider collective, through the luminous experiential concept of 'numinous' (Rudolf Otto). Jung defined the Self as the source of this collective and impersonal force, which he associates with archaic elements of the 'collective unconsciousness'. The Self is 'a religious mythologem' existing 'completely outside the personal sphere' (Jung 1968b: 30. In Jung, this *a priori* force is manifested in luminous personal experiences, in which the Ego's conflict with the Archetypes reach the consciousness dialectically, stimulating the individual's psyche. By contrast, Durkheim's sociological method pointed to Society as *a priori*, the external force expressed in 'collective representations', revealing the 'collective consciousness' of the group as a whole[14].The *a priori* conceptions of Self and Society reveal an affinity between Jung's internal concept of 'collective unconsciousness' and Durkheim's external 'collective consciousness'. But while Durkheim's starting point is Society, morally acting *upon* each individual, Jung's begins with the archaic Self that subconsciously functions from *within* through dreams and myths. These originate from a deeper archaic collective unconscious that manifests itself through inherited and pre-existing archetypes which are manifested in rituals and art as collective representations (Jung 1968a: 41-3, and 59-63). Jung borrowed the term from Levy-Bruhl[15], referring to a deeper esoteric world of 'moral, aesthetic, and religious values' of 'universally recognized ideals or feeling toned collective ideas' (1968b: 29). Jung discussed five elementary archetypes with a 'preconscious psychic disposition' that can initiate the creative or destructive forces within us: the Self, its Shadow, the Soul, the Divine Couple, and the Child. These archetypes have three important characteristics: first they are *a priori*, meaning that they are a natural part of human nature, pre-existing in the psychic of each individual by birth; second, they are elemental in the creation of social life, a collective unconsciousness, expressed in cosmology, arts, and religion; and third, because archetypes are esoteric, they are also thought to be universal[16].

Jung's psychoanalytical method is generally based on the resolution of the conflict between who we believe we are, and how we think we are perceived by others—our projection of a Self. He defined the Self as a unitary whole, a self-projection of a luminous God-image [*Imago Dei*] (1968b: 31 and 37).Its counterpart is the Shadow, the things we perceive to be foreign, outside our Self, but which in fact still spring out from inside ourselves, but we conveniently project onto others. Conversely, the Shadow has 'an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy, and accordingly an obsessive or, better, possessive quality' (1968b: 8-11). In Jung, religion thus played a vital role in expressing these eternal forces through cosmological symbolism. He illustrated these two contrasting perceptions of who we think we should be, and who we deny we are not, in the images of the Christ and the Antichrist, the former as the archetype of the Self, which is 'as good as perfect … the perfect man who is crucified', and Satan as the antithesis, His moral dark counterpart (1968b: 69). The symbolism of Jesus as an archetype of the Self stems from His ambiguous, legendary, marginal life, and unknown origin. His miraculous life was marked by persecution, self-sacrifice, resurrection, and ascension to Heaven. However, Jesus is only an aspect of the archaic Self of "Christ", which is present in everybody *a priori*, meaning that it pre-exists the historical figure of Jesus, while finding expression through the symbolic life of Jesus. Jung was thus careful to distinguish

between the natural symbol of Christ, from the historical figure associated with the institutionalised dogma of the Church (1969: 88), in the same way David Hume distinguished between natural and institutionalized religion.

In this context, Jung was also careful to underline that by the will of God, he does not mean the Christian God. "God," as in the philosophy of Socrates, is a *daimonion*, which is: 'a determining power which comes upon man from outside' (1968b: 27). Following the Bible in which 'Christ 'cast off his shadow from himself', Jung argued that 'the Christian-symbol (of Christ) lacks wholeness in the modern psychological sense, since it does not include ("cast off") the dark side of things but specifically excludes it in the form of a Luciferian opponent', i.e. the Antichrist (1968b: 41-45)[17]. Within the phenomenology of the *Imago Dei*, Christ's crucifixion symbolically becomes the 'crucifixion of the ego' (*Ibid*: 44), revealing the illusion of the Self (as in Buddhism). The moral struggle between what is thought to be Good and Evil goes beyond history, as it takes place inside the Self, through personal moments of transcendental interactions between the archetype that 'denotes completeness but is far from being perfect', and the illusionary image of the Self, *who we think we should be*. This conflict takes place inside the ego, which consists of somatic and psychic forces, united through psychosomatic experiences that under particular circumstances can be seen as psychosomatic neurosis (*Ibid*: 3).

In *Psychology and Religion* (1938), Jung further argued that the natural quaternity symbol is universal, as he considered the number Four to be the natural cosmological number of our understanding of the world (four elements, four directions, four seasons, four Hindu castes, four Gospels, four colours). However, within the Christian dogmatic tradition, the number Four is reduced to the Holy Trinity, which excludes the Mother of God who 'represents the earth', underlying the institutionalised theological association of women with desire (1969: 87). In a similar manner, the 'dogmatic figure of Jesus' excludes his dark earth side, the human one, becoming a moral ideal for imitation. In this context, God's images change but not God. By separating the two, and by highlighting the exclusion of the Shadow from the image of Christ, Jung argued, 'the reality of evil was denied by the Church Fathers" (1968b: 49), making thus, the important distinction between Jesus the historical person from "Jesus" the symbolic archetype of the Christ within. Furthermore, Jesus as a natural archetypal character is one of the endless manifestations of the archetype of the Self, which in Christianity is defined in the moral terms of sacrifice, humility, sense of justice, and transcendental self-liberation from the material body. However, these are motives to be found in various mythological cosmologies, and in a diversity of practices of sacred systems, which are conceptualized in imitation of the symbolic and historic lives of charismatic figures (as in Weber), such as Buddha and Muhammad. In this dualistic way, Jung (as well as Mary Douglas and Levi-Strauss) distinguished between history and mythology, the outer and the inner worlds of human existence[18] thus, returning to David Hume's ideas of the nature of the Human Mind, stripped from the moral implications carried by Durkheim's concept of the Sacred.

Towards a Pagan World Society [and the limits of history]

In conclusion, I wish to return to the criticisms made by Tambiah, Ruel, and Asad, over the anthropological categories of understanding, such as 'religion', 'belief', and the 'sacred' respectively, in relation to the methodological issues raised because of the gap between anthropological theory and ethnography. Back in 1973, Asad cited a number of anthropologists of the time who questioned the functionalist and structuralist methods of the

previous decades as being 'mechanical and lifeless' (Ardener cited in Asad 1973: 10). Furthermore, he criticized the concept of universalism arguing that this idea of a 'common sense' that is in itself problematic in respect to anthropology's historically constructed modernist legacy (Asad 1973: 16-17). Namely, the European ideal of 'modernity', defined in terms of progress[19] and 'universalism' in the form of so-called European 'humanitarianism', is often misconceived as being exclusively European (i.e. 'the West and the Rest' as in Hall 278-9). This has serious implications for the study of religion and the discipline of anthropology:

> Anthropology is [...] inserted into modern history in two ways: first, through the growth of Europe's political, economic, and scientific powers, which has provided anthropologists with their means of professional existence and their intellectual motive; and second, through the Enlightenment schematization of progressive time that has provided anthropology with its conceptual site: modernity' (Asad 1993: 19)

For Asad, the central cause of the intellectual crisis in anthropology in the 1970s to nowadays is evident by the absence of a coherent style, vocation, and irrelevance of the discipline to the changes in world history. This irrelevance was the result of the increasing specialization of anthropology into disconnected anthropological discourses, which, on the one hand, undermined the vocation of anthropology as a whole, and on the other, contributed to its professionalization, with anthropological associations multiplying in numbers and memberships, conferences, and publications, but lacking of a philosophical vision or understanding of the world. The methodological and intellectual crisis in the anthropology of religion and beyond, led towards a more specific historically investigation of 'religion'.

However, at this point I would further argue that the focus on the history of the discipline, although more than welcome, is rather limited in scope and understanding of the *experience* of the religious feeling, as discussed by Durkheim and Jung, either as a natural instinct or as an institutionalized belief. As I have tried to show in this essay, there is more to the sacred feeling that empowers those who are united under its symbolisms (against the unfaithful), so I further wonder if the collective conscious is an adequate concept in itself for understanding, for example, religious violence; and vice versa, if it is truly physically impossible to approach the sentiment of God as Hume claimed. On the other hand, for Hume this *individual* sentiment is spread everywhere and nowhere in the universe, as a poetic mimesis of the nature of the universe in itself. My argument here is that the recent turn towards historically specific types of fundamentalist Christianity, most of them rooted to the Americas, is limited both in scope and meaning. Unlike Durkheim, for Hume, religion is another branch of Philosophy echoing the Intellectualist movement in Anthropology in the 19th century. And in many ways, the discipline of anthropology is also another branch of the same Philosophical Tree.

As a brief conclusion to this paper then, I wish to suggest for a return to Hume's personal, and yet UNIVERSAL inquest of the HUMAN MIND, returning to the writings of Tylor on animism, but undressed from their ethnocentric 19th century bias (i.e. cultural evolution from magic to religion to science). A Philosophy of a Natural Religion can be used as a critique of society and its naturalized order (*see* Mary Douglas), in the same way Hume criticized his own social environment and limitless authority of the Church. The emancipating aspect of 'natural religion' might even be used in envisioning an anthropology of religion which will be again relevant to the changes in world history -as it was in Victorian times. In a re-enchanted world connected through the internet, where religious exchanges, competitions,

and comparisons take place through our computer screens on a daily basis, a world that is still learning to live by itself, the challenge is to avoid the misconceptions of the past, and the historical association of the discipline to Christianity and colonialism, and instead, to work towards the formation of a unified world in the Kantian spirit of cosmopolitanism, which however retains its plurality, diversity, polytheism, towards a multilingual, and why not, 'pagan' (from the Latin term referring to the farmer) world society. Getting rid of the fear of disorder and the apocalyptic anxiety of the end of civilization, in other words by killing our illusions, we could move on forward to a higher understanding of God, and even more importantly, *for* understanding each other.

Endnotes

[1] I use this phrase from Hume's *Dialogues concerning Natural religion* that Hume also uses to describe the design theorist Cleanthes (the narrator Pamphilus, DNR: 1).

[2] Another view was that Hume's enigmatic faith inclined towards the Buddhist doctrine of the soul (*anatta*) echoing Hume's view that 'religion' was a type of philosophical practice and discourse, as in Morris, B. (1994) *Anthropology of the Self: The Individual in Cultural Perspective* London: Pluto Press, p.19.

[3] David Hume's work on 'natural religion' should be seen in conversation with John Locke's distinction between 'natural' and 'revealed religion' which 'was current in Locke's day among those who wrote and spoke about religion.; no doubt the distinction should be seen as a descendant of the distinction between the preambles of faith and the articles of faith found in medieval philosophers such as Aquinas' (Wolterstorff, N. 1994: 172, in *The Cambridge Companion to Locke* (ed.) Vere Chappell, 172-198)

[4] *The Natural History of Religion* [1757] Vol. ii, p.352, cited in Pike 1970: 13.

[5] The *Dialogues* were not completed until Hume's death in 1776. The main Acts were written between 1751 and 1761; Hume made a second revision in 1761, and completed his final enigmatic Act [XII] the year of his death in 1776. A number of commentators have highlighted Hume's eagerness to publish the *Dialogues* two years *after* his death, because of the restrictions of imposed on the philosophy of religion at the time by the Presbyterian establishment and popularized Calvinist Creed, which Hume inevitably came to question (Smith 1947: 9-13, Pike 1970: xiv-xv, O'Connor 2001:4-5, among others).

[6] The *a priori* and *a posteriori* understandings of the natural world constitute what has been called 'Hume's Fork', the former referring to the *a priori* natural logic of numbers, the latter to the *a posteriori* domain of material empiricism (O' Connor 2001: 20-21).

[7] The term 'mitigated' scepticism originates from Hume's *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (EHU: 161, cited in O'Connor 2001: 44) and is used in opposition to Cleanthes' accusation of Pyrrhonistic scepticism towards Philo, referring to the ancient nihilistic movement of the Pyrrhonians (DNR: 35). From the author's perspective, the exploration of the tension between two contrasting deisms (Demea/Cleanthes) and two sceptical positions (Philo) offers the central motivation that underline the entire dialogue.

[8] Philo rhetorically asks Cleanthes: 'What peculiar privilege has this little agitation of the brain which we call thought, that we must thus make it a model of the whole universe?' (DNR: 50).

[9] 'The belief of invisible intelligent power has been generally diffused over the human race, in all places and in all ages; but it has neither perhaps been so universal as to admit of no exception, nor has it been, in any degree uniform in the ideas, which it has suggested. Some nations have been discovered, who entertained no sentiments of Religion […] It would appear, therefore, that this preconception springs not from an original instinct or primary impression of nature […] since every instinct of this kind has been found absolutely universal in all nations and ages [… The first religious principles must be secondary' (NHR: 134)

[10] Hertz, R. (1960) *Death and the right hand* (eds.) Rodney and Claudia Needham, Routledge.

[11] Memory as a *habitus* and a technique of the self, anticipated Marcel Mauss, Goffman, Bourdieu and Foucault, among others, towards the sociological understanding of *habitus* in everyday life, as well as, in constructing moral personas [*see* Marcel Mauss essays 1934-9, particularly (1934) 'Les Techniques du corps' in *Journal de Psychologie* 32 (3-4). Reprinted in Mauss, *Sociologie et anthropologie*, 1936, Paris: PUF; Goffman *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (1959); and Bourdieu, P. (1980) *The Logic of Practice*, and (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*].

[12] Full quote: 'Custom […] is insufficient, by itself, to generate *belief* in any causal relation. This requires, in addition to the relations of constantly conjoined temporally distinct perceptions (henceforth, *constant precedence*), the presence of one customarily associated perceptions in the form of an impression in sensation, reflexion, or memory. There are thus three distinct facets of Hume's account of the impression-original of the idea of cause: i) the experience (memory) of a *constant precedence* of perceptions; ii) a custom characterized by a feeling of facility in the transition of consciousness from one of the perceptions related by constant precedence to the other; and when one of these perceptions is present as an impression, iii) the power of custom to induce us not only to think of its associate but to believe that in represents something really existent' Waxman, W. (1994) *Hume's Theory of Consciousness* Cambridge UP, p. 168

[13] The distinction between insiders and outsiders is a matter of power: 'To be "inside" is to have power; to be "outside" is to lack it (Bourdieu 1977/1989: 55). Accordingly, 'objective' structures in ethnographic analysis (referring to static categories of time, space, hierarchy, customs, habits, and so on) are 'themselves products of historical practices... constantly reproduced and transformed by historical practices whose productive principle is itself the product of the structures which it consequently tends to reproduce' (Bourdieu 1977: 83). In his critique of structuralism Bourdieu famously highlighted the danger of reproducing this 'field of *doxa* of that which is taken for granted', with the fruitless result to 'only reinforce the structures by providing them a particular form of "rationalization"' (Bourdieu 1977/1989: 17, 20, 166).

[14] Durkheim's sociological method has been severely criticized for its a-historicity (Stanley J. Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990, 50-51), emphasis on a homogeneous and unifying concept of a 'sacred" (Michael J. Sallnow, "Communitas Reconsidered" *MAN* Vol. 16, 1981), and his *a priori* concept of 'society" denies individual agency (Marilyn Strathern "1989: The Concept of Society is Theoretically Obsolete: The Presentations: For the Motion (I)." In *Key Debates In Anthropology*. Ed. Tim Ingold (London: Routledge, 1996, 60-66). Durkheim has been contrasted to Weber's emphasis on individual action ("charisma") as the means of making history: "Individualist thought (or methodological individualism) is often associated to Max Weber, whereas collectivist thought (or methodological collectivism) is associated with Marx and Durkheim" (Thomas H. Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues*. London: Pluto, 2001, 84).

[15] The term was first use by Levy-Bruhl in *How Natives Think* (1910).

[16] However, unlike Durkheim, Jung was adamant that History begins with the individual: "In our most private and most subjective lives we are not only the passive witnesses of our age, and its sufferers, but also its makers. We make our own epoch" (Jung 1934). In this context Jungian psychology is also connected to the making of history, as in Weber's concept of "charisma," referring to the individual "'natural leaders' in times of psychic, physical, economic, ethical, religious, political distress." Max Weber, *Max Weber: On Charisma and Institution Building*, ed. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 18.

[17] In addition to the archetypes of the Self (Christ) and the Shadow (Antichrist) Jung referred to three more archetypes: the Soul (the male animus and female anima within Jesus), the *syzygy* (Divine Couple) as the ideal of complete wholeness and holiness, religiously expressed in the marriage of Christ to the Church, and the "Child," the promise of transcendence symbolized by the birth of Christ.

[18] In this context, Levi-Strauss highlighted a "gap" between history of the past and politics of the present: "in our own societies, history has replaced mythology and fulfils the same function ... to ensure ... the future will remain faithful to the present and to the past. For us, however, the future should be always different ... depending of course on our political preferences" in *Myth and Meaning* (London: Routledge, 1980), 43.

[19] Weber in 'Science as a Vocation' (1919) questioned the European concept of 'modernity', defined in terms of Protestant secularism, the division of space and labour, and the industry of war, as a 'meaningless progressiveness' (1968: 299) *Max Weber: On Charisma and Institution Building*, ed. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

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